

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims

Claim 26 (Currently Amended): A structure comprising of at least first, second and third identical boards having planar surfaces and laterally mounted locking elements along a common joint, said locking elements being wedge-shaped and having surfaces relative to the common joint that decrease or increase entirely along the joint in a linear manner, wherein the locking elements are made in such a way that, simultaneously, by displacing the first board relative to the second board along a first common joint,

the first board can be connected with the second board in a positive fit along the first common connecting joint, both in a perpendicular direction relative to the planar surface of the board, as well as in a parallel direction relative to the planar surface of the board, and, at the same time, in a perpendicular direction relative to the first common joint, and

the first board can be connected with the third board in a positive fit along a second common connecting joint, at least in a perpendicular direction relative to the surface of the board.

Claim 27 (Previously Presented): The structure according to claim 26, wherein all or some of the locking elements are made in such a way that the displacement can take place exclusively in one plane that is parallel relative to the surface of the boards.

Claim 28 (Previously Presented): The structure according to claim 27, wherein the first common connecting joint runs in a perpendicular direction relative to the second common connecting joint.

Claim 29 (Previously Presented): Boards having laterally mounted locking elements with which two boards can be connected with each other laterally in an adhesive-free manner by positive fit, wherein the locking elements are made in such a manner, that there is an initial position into which the boards can exclusively be brought by lowering in a vertical direction, wherein a common joint is formed between the boards in which a play

occurs, and there is a final position in which the boards are interlocked by positive fit in a vertical direction and in which no play occurs at the common joint and wherein the panels may be connected with each other in an adhesive-free manner.

Claim 30 (Previously Presented): Boards according to claim 29, wherein the boards may be brought from the initial position into the final position by displacement along the common joint.

Claim 31 (Previously Presented): Boards according to claim 30, wherein the locking elements are such that the boards can be brought into the initial position when, along the common connecting joint, they are arranged offset relative to one another by more than 50% and less than 100%.

Claim 32 (Previously Presented): Boards according to claim 31, wherein there is an intermediate position in which the boards, at least in a vertical direction, are interlocked by positive fit and in which a play occurs at the common joint of the two boards.

Claim 33 (Currently Amended): Boards according to claim 32, wherein a board, as a locking element, has a perpendicular groove that is inserted in a perpendicular direction relative to the planar surface, and the other board has at least a corresponding protruding perpendicular locking element which arrives in the perpendicular groove when the boards are in the initial position, wherein the perpendicular groove and/or a lateral boundary of the perpendicular groove, at least in part, have a course that does not run parallel relative to the common joint, and/or the perpendicular locking element and/or a lateral boundary of the perpendicular locking element at least in part have such a course that does not run parallel relative to the common joint.

Claim 34 (Currently Amended): Boards according to claim 33, wherein, in the final position, a lateral boundary of the perpendicular ~~grooves~~ groove adjoins a lateral boundary of the perpendicular locking element intimately.

Claim 35 (Previously Presented): Boards according to claim 34, wherein at least one lateral boundary of the perpendicular groove and/or a lateral boundary of the perpendicular locking element is formed wedge-shaped, has such a course relative to the

common joint that the distance to the common joint decreases or increases along the joint in a linear manner.

Claim 36 (Previously Presented): Boards according to claim 35, wherein at least one lateral wall of a groove that is provided as a locking element runs in an arched, wave-like, serpentine or sawtooth-like manner.

Claim 37 (Previously Presented): Boards according to claim 35, wherein there is at least one contact area between two locking elements which area runs in a perpendicular direction relative to the surface.

Claim 38 (Previously Presented): Boards according to claim 35, wherein there is at least one contact area between two locking elements formed by undercuts.

Claim 39 (Previously Presented): Boards according to claim 35, wherein one board laterally has, as a locking element, at least one groove and another board laterally has at least one tongue.

Claim 40 (Currently Amended): Boards according to claim 35, wherein the bottom surface of a lateral tongue forms a continuous flat surface with the bottom side of a vertical locking element.

Claim 41 (Previously Presented): Boards according to claim 35, wherein a bottom groove-cheek of a lateral groove forms a flat surface with the bottom of the perpendicular groove.

Claim 42 (Previously Presented): Boards, according to claim 35, that can be connected by means of a paste or, in particular, adhesive sealing compound and/or an adhesive between two interlocked boards.

Claim 43 (Previously Presented): Boards according to claim 35, having a moisture repellant paste or adhesive mass between two boards which adjoins the surface of the boards.

Claim 44 (Previously Presented): Boards according to claim 35, wherein the boards are laminate panels.

Claim 45 (Previously Presented): Boards according to claim 35, which are part of a floor covering.

Claim 46 (Currently Amended): A method for connecting at least first, second and third boards having planar surfaces with laterally mounted locking elements, in particular of boards comprising the steps of:

displacing the first board relative to the second board along a first common connecting joint, wherein simultaneously

the first board being connected with the second board in a positive fit along the first common connecting joint, both in a perpendicular direction relative to the planar surface of the board, and in a parallel direction relative to the surface of the board, and, at the same time, in a perpendicular direction relative to the first common connecting joint, and

the first board being connected with the third board in a positive fit along a second common connecting joint, at least in a perpendicular direction relative to the planar surface of the board.

Claim 47 (Previously Presented): The method according to claim 46, wherein the displacement occurs exclusively in one plane parallel relative to the surface of the board.

Claim 48 (Previously Presented): The method according to claim 47, wherein the first connecting joint runs in a perpendicular direction relative to the second common connecting joint.

Claim 49 (Previously Presented): A method for connecting at least first and second boards with laterally mounted locking elements, wherein two of the boards being connected laterally by positive fit in an adhesive-free manner, comprising the following steps:

bringing the boards into an initial position, in particular, exclusively by lowering in a vertical direction, wherein a common joint is formed between the boards in which a play occurs, and

bringing the boards into a final position, in which the boards are interlocked in a vertical direction by positive fit, and in which no play occurs at the common joint and the panels are connected in an adhesive-free manner.

Claim 50 (Previously Presented): The method according to claim 49, wherein the boards are brought from the initial position into the final position by displacement along the common connecting joint.

Claim 51 (Previously Presented): Boards according to claim 30, wherein the locking elements are such that the boards can be brought into the initial position when, along the common connecting joint, they are arranged offset relative to one another by more than 66% and less than 80%.